



Swami Prakashananda Delights CMLA

In his week long presence at Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles, Swami Prakashananda delighted with his discourses that were steeped in bhakti, revealed the practical and delighted with its simplicity.

The mornings of Sept.18-23 were dedicated to the Vibhishana Gita that was delivered to the Devi group of satsangs. Explaining Vibhishana's question on how the Lord was going to fight Ravana (who was bedecked in armor, riding a chariot, when the Lord was barefoot and with no armor), the Lord tells Vibhishana that the chariot that one needs to gain victory is a completely different one and enumerates the internal qualities one has to acquire to fight the battles of samsara: valor and fortitude are the two wheels; truthfulness, good character and steadfastness are the 3 flags of victory and safety; the horses of this chariot are strength, discrimination, self-control and caring for others; and the reins are made up of forgiveness, compassion, and equanimity.

In the evenings Swamiji's talks were from the Purajana Gita, a portion of the Uttarakand where the Lord gives instructions to the residents of Ayodhya as to how one can attain mukti. He cited the human birth as the rarest of the rare, and one not to be used for pleasure or attainment of heaven, but for sadhana. Swamiji highlighted that in the Ramayan, satsang is given a lot of importance as a sadhana as no amount of prayer or reading scriptures could inculcate viveka, a product of satsang. Only when viveka matures does vairagya set in, he said.

Swami Prakashananda also met with balavihar teachers and took questions from them. On dealing with children in class he said, each of them, whether disciplined or not, were god's own and if teachers made this understanding their own, they would find it effective in communicating with all children. On sadhana and meditation his advice was clear, 'punish the mind' he said when it wavers by making vows of japa and concentration.

Swamiji's soulful voice brought all the beautiful bhajans to life — and his humorous and easy going style was enjoyed by one and all.

On Sept.23, Swamiji visited the CM Valley center at the



Valley Hindu Temple and enlightened the audience there with his spiritual thoughts. He asked a question of everybody: Which is best? Being educated, religious, rich, or good? Everyone had a different choice!

Swamiji answered that being "good" was the best. The good person will bring happiness to all. He gave the example of Sri Rama and elucidated on the verse from Sri Ramcharitramanas, "saral subav na man kuti laye". He explained the importance of humility and simplicity. Anything that we have in life, we should give credit to the supreme, he said and put yourself last when it is time to claim credit.

Swamiji laid emphasis on practicing simplicity of dress, food and speech. The complexity of dress, speech, and food is the cause of disease. Simple food without too much flavor and spices keeps the mind calm. Simple clothing keeps your attitude under check. Simplicity in speech keeps one from unnecessary loose talk.



Acharya Mahadevji : Act Like Rama, Follow Krishna's Advice

Chinmaya Mission, San Gabriel hosted two lectures by Acharya Mahadevanji at the Ashtalakshmi temple in North Hollywood on Aug.25 and 26. The first lecture was entitled "Sri Rama — lighting the pathway to perfection" and the second one was entitled "Sri Krishna — at the finish line — Bhagavad Gita."

Mahadevji explained that while Sri Rama demonstrated how 'Manava Dharma' was to be practiced, Sri Krishna was an example of Ishwara Dharma. Hence the truth of the statement "Do as Sri Rama does; do as Sri Krishna says."

The word Rama itself means "one who revels in the Supreme Reality". The word 'ayana' means "pathway". So Ramayana is the pathway followed by Rama. Sri Rama's life was a model to follow in the matter of living out own daily lives in the spirit of Dharma. Ramayana characters exemplified bhakti. When bhakti becomes intense, the worshiper and worshiped eventually merge into one. At that point the duality between the subject (witness) and the object disappears. This state is called objectless awareness. This is the state of Pure Being, the state of Meditation. Acharyaji explained that this can only be achieved in



slow, systematic steps.

The practical techniques for achieving this Rama-like perfection are described in the Bhagavad Gita in great detail. This was the topic of the second lecture.. By following the path shown by Lord Krishna in the Gita, we only tune our minds in the right direction, to the right frequency. The ultimate transformation from con-



sciousness of material objects to Pure Awareness happens through the Lords' grace or equivalently, the Guru's grace.

Mahadevji summarized the essence of each chapter in the Gita showing the relevance of Karma Yoga, and Bhakti & Jnana Yoga in finishing the last lap of our journey—Self Realization.

CHYK's 'Keep Calm with Hanuman' Brings Community Together

On September 29, the CHYK group (Chinmaya Yuvakendra), hosted an event at Rameshwaram to chant the Hanuman Chalisa 108 times. The event 'Keep Calm with Hanuman' was open to all South Asians in Southern California.

The event began at 7am with enthusiastic participation. Through the day several hundred people, both CMLA members and others, joined in the holy recitation. One devotee who said he saw a poster put up by the organizers in 'Little India' in Artesia, came for the opening recitation, fasted all day, and stayed until the very end of the program.

The serene satsang was appreciated by all. The event concluded in the evening with Hanuman arati, conducted by Swami Ishwarananda. Everyone was also encouraged to partake of the sumptuous prasad that was prepared by CMLA volunteers.

They also raised over \$8,000 in donations for CMLA and the upcoming Youth Empowerment Program which will be held



next year in Dallas, TX. One lady devotee made a donation and said she was grateful for being able to chant the Hanuman Chalisa for her brother who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

In addition to chanting the Hanuman Chalisa 108 times, CHYKs sold books

and CDs for the CHYK National Seva Project, which has a purpose to further the teachings of Vedanta through Chinmaya Mission publications. CHYKs also began collecting questions on Hinduism/Vedanta from youth, which will be compiled in a Q&A-format book.

Redlands BV Children Perform Ganesh Puja

The children of the Redlands balavihar gathered and celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi. They were told about the symbolism of the form of the Lord and stories about Him. The children then performed a group puja, where they learned the several steps involved.



Music Lovers Captivated by CMLA's Kalanjali Concert

The second event organized by Kalanjali, the cultural wing of Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles was a pleaser with the audience enjoying the renditions from on stage, and artiste Ramesh Narayan in turn, happy with the response of the crowd and CMLA organizers.

The Hindustani vocalist's concert on Sept. 29 ran over three hours and had the audience blissful engagement throughout. The 250 people who had gathered at Chinmaya Rameshwaram were treated to music that was reminiscent of Narayan's guru, the famed Pt.Jasraj of the Mewati gharana: there was the spiritual element, open throated vocalization, enchanting sargams and of course, pure melody. Narayan began with an invocation to Lord Ganesha. He then performed some bandishes and was ably supported by SoCal artistes Professor Abhiman Kaushal on tabla and Dr. Gopal Marathe on harmonium. Toward the end, inviting verse from the audience - one of who willingly wrote a few lines - he set it to composed music from onstage, much to the enjoyment of the audience. The singer concluded with his signature Nirvana Shatkam.

On Oct.1 and 2, Narayan returned to CMLA to teach bhajans to all interested. On the first day, 30 rasikas including members of Swaranjali, the bhajan group of CMLA, gathered to do just this after which he joined the regular Monday puja at the temple to sing the Shiva Stuti during the abhishekam. Fifty people gathered the next day and were thrilled to learn a few bhajans in raagas Malhar, Bhagashri, Bhimpalas, Charukeshi. He shared his knowledge freely and inspired, later



sang for another 40 minutes with Hemant Ekbote on tabla and Babu Parameshwaran on harmonium. It was a perfect baithak style setting which enthused music lovers.

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